

XXXI. How to Sit Pain-free at Home with Back Pain/Sciatica

When you sit incorrectly, you are likely to settle into the C position (slouching, slumped, or flexed) with the accompanying stress to the parts of your back. For many of us, the sitting stress continues throughout most of the day. We sit when we eat, drive, work, watch TV and when we are in the bathroom.

Many researchers believe the significant increase in cases of back pain and sciatica over the past few decades have much to do with the fact that more and more of us are spending our workdays in chairs. Improper sitting is a common contributing factor to back pain, sciatica, and the delay of healing. Yes, at the root of all back pain, one can generally find a chair.

Even more distressing is that the poor slumped sitting posture begins to shape your standing posture. Your body remembers the sitting position and attempts to continue the posture when standing. Instead of having erect and correct posture like a marine soldier, you begin to stand slouched and slumped.

Therefore, it is important for you to understand proper sitting and sitting postures. We recommend that our patients in pain avoid sitting as much as possible. We advise lying down or standing up whenever possible.

Avoid sitting on overstuffed furniture, easy chairs, and recliners when you are experiencing back pain. If you feel that you must sit on such furniture, use a throw pillow behind your back to prop yourself up as straight as possible.

Toilet sitting: one possibility is to sit on the toilet backwards, gaining support from the back part of the toilet. A bed pan is another option.

We want to convey to you that one of the key points about all forms of sitting and back pain is the benefit of movement and position changes. The most important tactic you can use to combat back pain while sitting is to mix sitting with walking and movement. If attempting to sit with perfect posture, you should still mix in changing your back positions as well as increasing movement and walking.

The following are some general rules or strategies for reducing the stress on your back while sitting at home:

- A. Lie on the couch with low back support using throw pillows.
- B. When sitting on a couch or recliner, vary the amount of recline in the recliner. Keep a throw pillow in your low back.
- C. Lie on the floor on your back with your feet up on the coffee table or couch.
- D. Lie on the floor on your stomach.
- E. Get up and walk around the room on a regular basis.
- F. Change positions every 20-30 minutes or so.